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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WENSTRUP).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 18, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BRAD WENSTRUP to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

GOP BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this week, we begin the Republican charade of pretending to balance the budget in 10 years, without a hint of how it really is possible. They intend to repeal ObamaCare, which was the central issue in the last campaign, where you will remember President Obama was reelected, the Senate went even more Democratic, and House Democrats gained seats and won over 1

million more votes than the Republicans.

Normal people would think that the ObamaCare issue might be settled. Does anybody realistically think it's going away anytime soon?

The Republican fantasy budget reduces taxes dramatically without a hint of how it would be possible, without exploding the deficit or dramatically raising taxes on the middle class.

This is consistent with what the Romney-Ryan ticket said on the campaign trail last fall. The same issue where they dodged, dissembled, or ignored the perfectly reasonable question: How is it possible? Six months later, it's back in the budget, but there still is no answer.

During the last 40 years, there have been only four budgets without deficits: the last three Clinton budgets and the one that George Bush inherited from Bill Clinton. In each case, taxes as a percentage of the total economy were over 20 percent. In this Republican fantasyland, budgets are balanced with revenues at 19 percent of the economy, yet meeting the needs of 78 million more seniors and an infrastructure deficit that is growing as America is falling apart.

Clearly, this is not remotely possible if we're going to enjoy anything like our current quality of life. There is a real-world intersection of budget-saving opportunities with potential areas of agreement. Health care reform is one, but not just by shifting the burden to seniors and the disabled, as the Republicans propose in their fantasy budget.

My home State of Oregon is in the middle of an exciting demonstration of how to squeeze out the waste we all know is there and realign incentives. Instead of the empty ritual of pretending to repeal ObamaCare, let's work together to accelerate reform for all Americans.

If the Oregon experiment works—and frankly, many of these efficiencies, by

the way, are already achieved in other parts of the country and with some private health systems—we could save more than \$1.2 trillion that the flawed sequester is supposed to achieve in the next 10 years.

Another area of irresponsibility in the Republican budget is defense. Instead of increasing Pentagon spending, we should reform it. The most obvious target is the nuclear arsenal larger than anything we need for nuclear deterrence. Ten percent of our nuclear weapons would decimate Russia. A handful of missiles would wipe North Korea off the map, yet they propose to spend over two-thirds of \$1 trillion over the next 10 years on this bloated arsenal.

Before we increase the Pentagon budget, maybe we should figure out why the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is now 7 years behind schedule, 70 percent over budget, and the Pentagon still doesn't know how it's going to meet the more than \$1 trillion in operating and maintenance costs.

Amazingly, the Republicans want to increase spending for the Pentagon, the only major budget so flawed it can't even be audited. There are bipartisan opportunities to reduce and reform the military, but you're not hearing about it in the Republican budget this week.

Instead of a Republican rerun of a bad reality TV show, let's consider working together on areas to change how the government does business and give more value to the taxpayer while we get spending under control.

RETURN THE 27TH AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION TO ITS ORIGINAL INTENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARROW) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARROW of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.J. Res. 33,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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